## JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

455 Golden Gate Avenue San Francisco, California 94102-3660

## **Report Summary**

TO: Members of the Judicial Council

FROM: Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee

Hon. Mary Ann Grilli and Hon. Michael Nash, Co-chairs

George Nielsen, 415-865-7670; Bonnie Hough, 415-865-7668;

Ruth McCreight, 415-865-7666

DATE: March 30, 2000

SUBJECT: Request to Set Aside Voluntary Declaration of Paternity (adopt Forms

1296.77, 1296.78, and 1296.79; adopt Cal. Rules of Court, rule

1280.10) (Action Required)

#### **Issue Statement**

The Judicial Council is required by Family Code section 7575(c)(6) to develop forms and procedures to effectuate Family Code section 7575(c), which provides a process for the set aside of voluntary declarations of paternity. The proposed forms and rule would satisfy the requirements of Family Code section 7575(c)(6).

The Request for Hearing and Application to Set Aside Voluntary Declaration of Paternity and the Responsive Declaration to Application to Set Aside Voluntary Declaration of Paternity were originally circulated for comment in the summer of 1999. The forms cited Family Code section 2120 in describing certain grounds for bringing the request to set aside a voluntary declaration of paternity. Those forms were adopted in the last cycle but were subsequently revoked, revised, and recirculated for comment as a result of legislation that removed Family Code section 2120 as a basis for setting aside voluntary declarations of paternity.

#### Recommendation

The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council, effective July 1, 2000, adopt the following forms and rule:

- 1. Form 1296.77, Request for Hearing and Application to Set Aside Voluntary Declaration of Paternity (Family Law—Uniform Parentage—Governmental), to request the set aside of a voluntary declaration of paternity.
- 2. Form 1296.78, Responsive Declaration to Application to Set Aside Voluntary Declaration of Paternity (Family Law—Uniform Parentage—Governmental), to respond to a request to set aside a voluntary declaration of paternity.

- 3. Form 1296.79, Order After Hearing on Motion to Set Aside Voluntary Declaration of Paternity (Family Law—Uniform Parentage—Governmental), for the order resulting from the hearing on the set aside of the voluntary declaration of paternity.
- 4. Rule 1280.10 of the California Rules of Court, regarding procedures for hearings to set aside voluntary declarations of paternity when no previous action has been filed. This rule explains the procedure for the creation of a court file upon the filing of a request for hearing when there is no prior action between the parties.

#### Rationale for Recommendation

Whenever a child is born in California to unmarried parents, the hospital must provide the natural mother and any man identified as the natural father with a voluntary declaration of paternity along with informational materials. (Fam. Code, § 7571.) A completed voluntary declaration of paternity has the same force and effect as a judgment for paternity issued by a court of competent jurisdiction and is recognized as a basis for the establishment of an order for child custody, visitation, or child support. (Fam. Code, § 7576.) These forms are currently executed in over 70 percent of births to unmarried parents in California.

A parent can make a request to set aside a voluntary declaration of paternity based upon any of the reasons set forth in section 473 of the Code of Civil Procedure, plus fraud, perjury, or equitable grounds. (Fam. Code, § 7575(c).) If the voluntary declaration of paternity is set aside, the court must order that the mother, child, and alleged father submit to genetic tests to determine parentage.

The proposed forms and rule are necessary to comply with the requirement of Family Code section 7575(c)(6) that the Judicial Council develop forms and procedures to enable litigants to file and respond to motions to set aside voluntary declarations of paternity.

#### Alternative Actions Considered

Because there are presently no forms or rules to accomplish what is required by Family Code section 7575(c)(6), no alternative actions were considered.

#### **Comments From Interested Parties**

The forms were circulated for comment December 23, 1999, as item W00-13. In addition to the standard mailing list used for soliciting comments, the proposal was sent to all family law facilitators, child support commissioners, district attorney family support divisions, and the Department of Social Services, as well as to the numerous attorneys and organizations throughout the state with a focus on family law. Responses were received from 29 commentators, none of whom disagreed with the need for the forms. The comments were mainly suggestions to improve the format and clarity of the forms.

Staff members analyzed all of the comments and made recommendations, which were considered by the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee. A comprehensive table summarizing the comments and the committee's responses is attached, beginning at page 14.

### Implementation Requirements and Costs

Following established procedures, camera-ready copies of the forms will be delivered to the courts and to commercial Judicial Council forms publishers. The courts will make copies available to the public. In addition, copies of the forms will be posted to the California Courts Web site. There are no costs additional to the normal costs courts incurred in providing forms.

The texts of the proposed forms and rule are attached at pages 4–13.

# **Comments for**

Request to Set Aside Voluntary Declaration of Paternity (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 1280.10 and forms 1296.77, 1296.78, and 1296.79)

	Commentator	Position	Comment on Behalf of Group	Comments	Committee Response
1.	John Chemeleski Commissioner Los Angeles County Bar, Family Law Section	N	Y	<ul> <li>a) Form 1296.79, Order After Hearing On Motion to Set Aside Voluntary Declaration of Paternity</li> <li>1) Suggest adding option boxes for paragraphs 4 and 5 and the text that follows those numbers. If box 3a is checked, denying the motion, it would not be necessary to order genetic testing or set a further hearing. Otherwise, the judicial officer would have to cross out paragraphs 4 and 5 when denying such a motion.</li> </ul>	a)  1) Agree; see revised items 4 and 5.
2.	Patty McCrea Court Services Supervisor Riverside Superior Court, Juvenile Div.	Y		a) Rule and forms are being established as directed by Family Code 7575(c)(6). Impact will be felt predominantly in the Family Law Div. and by the family law facilitator, since the forms direct the party seeking to set aside the order to the facilitator if they need assistance.	a) Agree.
3.	Cathie Rouse Superior Court Clerk II San Luis Obispo Superior Court	A		a) The information for <i>Request for Hearing</i> was easy to understand and explained how to fill out Form 1296.77 in detail.	
4.	Deborah DeMarchi Facilitator Mendocino County Superior Court	A		a) Agree.	

5.	Laura Masunaga Commissioner Siskiyou County Superior Court	A	a) Agree.
6.	Marisol Alcantar Legal Assistant, Family Law Facilitator Kern County Superior Court		a) Will someone be able to initiate an action with the Request for Hearing and Application to Set Aside Voluntary Declaration of Paternity?
7.	Carla Khal Facilitator Tulare County Superior Court	AM	a) Rule 1280.10, paragraph (f), is an incomplete sentence.  a) Agree. See revised rule, subsection (f).
8.	Cathy Scoggin Title 4-D Courtroom Clerk Yolo County Superior Court	N	<ul> <li>a) Agree, if the file can be used for subsequent filings such as child support establishment and judgments.</li> <li>b) Disagree, if the courts are going to have to house yet another separate file. The courts do not need yet another duplicated file, as there are enough family law cases to cross-refer when pulling calendars. Should the defendant wish to set aside they can already do so in an OSC/NOM in the family law case.</li> <li>a) Agree.</li> <li>b) Disagree, as file can be used for subsequent filings. Judicial Council required to develop these forms by Family Code section 7575(c)(6).</li> </ul>
9.	Norma Castellanos-Perez Commissioner Tulare County Superior Court	A	a) Rule 1280.10 seems appropriate.  1) Paragraph (f) seems to be an incomplete sentence. Suggest adding at the end of the sentence "may be filed in this same court file."  a)  1) Agree; see revised rule, subsection (f).
10.	Terrie Jarrett Legal Process Clerk II Calaveras County Superior Court	A	a) Agree.
11.	David Jetton Court Manager Los Angeles Superior Court	AM	a) Form 1296.79 conflicts with rule 1280.10(e).  1) The form directs the petitioner to send a copy of the order to CDSS, while the rule directs the clerk to send a copy. Suggest changing the rule to conform to the form so that the

				burden is on the petitioner to send notice.
12.	Phrasel L. Shelton Rules Committee Chair San Mateo County Superior Court	A		a) Agree.
13.		AM		<ul> <li>a) Rule 1280.10</li> <li>1) Paragraph (c) could have a timing problem for service—26 days in California, 31 days out of state.</li> <li>2) Paragraph (d) doesn't specify the manner in which notice is to be given or refer to CCP sections for notice procedure.</li> <li>3) Paragraph (f) is not a complete sentence.</li> <li>a)  1) Agree; see revised rule, subsection (d).</li> <li>3) Agree; see revised rule, subsection (d).</li> <li>3) Agree; see revised rule, subsection (d).</li> </ul>
14.	Judith E. Harding Chair Family Law Section, Bar Association of San Francisco	AM	Y	a) Request for Hearing and Application to Set Aside Voluntary Declaration of Paternity  1) There are very different procedures for setting aside voluntary declarations of paternity as compared to setting aside actual judgments of paternity. The Request for Hearing and Application, as drafted, is certain to confuse anyone who tries to complete the form. For example, in number 5, the form asks whether there is a judgment or order for paternity in place. A person filling out this form could reasonably conclude that this was the form necessary to apply for a setting aside of a judgment of paternity. This is certainly not the case. Suggest that either the form should be redrafted to be a form that can accomplish either goal, or all the language in number 5 should be two boxes on the form at the top. One box should indicate that the motion is to set aside a judgment of paternity, and the

			other box should be the request for hearing to set aside voluntary declaration of paternity. If this were done, then paragraph number 3 should be changed to include a request to set aside a judgment of paternity. The form should state at paragraph 3, "I request that the voluntary declaration of paternity or the judgment of paternity be set aside. I understand that if my request to set aside is granted, genetic tests will be ordered." It was a good idea to commit this kind of motion to Judicial Council forms in the interest of simplicity and facilitating the motion for litigants who might not be sophisticated. The <i>Responsive Declaration to Application to Set Aside Voluntary Declaration of Paternity</i> should be changed to include the possibility that it is a responsive declaration to application to set aside a judgment of paternity. The <i>Order After Hearing</i> needs to be changed to include the possibility that the application or motion was designed to set aside a judgment of paternity. Language needs to be added to both the foregoing forms to include the possibility of setting aside of judgment.		
15.	Christine Copeland Family Law Facilitator Santa Cruz County Superior Court	AM	<ul> <li>a) Rule 1280.10</li> <li>1) Subsection (b), line 2, what order is being referred to?</li> <li>2) Subsection (f) is an incomplete sentence. Add "shall be used in subsequent proceedings."</li> <li>b) Form 1296.77</li> <li>1) Item 2, add: □ or not attached because</li> <li>2) Item 7, add: □ Mother □ Father</li> </ul>	2) b)	Agree that "order" is not the correct word; see revised subsection (b). Agree that subsection (f) needs to be revised.  Agree.

				en receive welfare in 2	) Disagree; information is
			County		confidential.
			3) Change in	tem 7 to item 8.	
			c) Information S	Sheet for Rule 1296.77	Disagree; there is no item 8.
			1) On page	3, paragraph 2, line 3, add after the c)	
					) Agree. See revisions.
				least 18 years old, must serve the	, 8
			other par	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
				Sheet for Rule 1296.78	
			,	d paragraph: "Court clerk will not file d)	
			ŕ	1 0 1	Discourse Prostings years
					) Disagree. Practices vary.
			file origin		
				'5 court days" to "10 calendar days."	
			e) Form 1296.7		Agree.
				dd: ☐ Mother shall pay \$ for e)	
			testing		) Disagree. Practices vary throughout
				shall pay \$ for testing	the state.
			☐ Mothe	r	
			☐ (lab) to	o arrange testing	
16.	Joy Lazo	AM	a) Rule 1280.10	a)	
	Research Attorney		1) Paragrap	h (a): Delete "(1)" at the end of the	) Agree.
	San Diego County Juvenile		sentence.		, ,
	Court			h (b), line 2: Suggest changing the	Agree.
	0.0421			der" to "declaration."	, 1181001
					Agree.
				to the form title.	) Agree.
					) Agree.
				heet for Form 1296.77 b)	Agice.
			*		) Discours The form is a male
			,		) Disagree. The form is a rule.
				'to "Judicial Council Form 1296.77"	
				cond paragraph, line 5, add "Request	
					Disagree. The name of the form is
			Aside		correctly stated.
1			,	all that says "Front page" to "Page	
l			one."		

			c)	<ul> <li>Instruction Sheet for Form 1296.78</li> <li>1) Change the "Cal. Rules of Court, rule 1296.78" to "Judicial Council Form 1296.78."</li> <li>2) Change all that says "Front page" to "Page one."</li> <li>3) In instructions for numbered paragraph 1, line 2, change the word "people" to "of the persons."</li> </ul>	2)	Disagree. The form is a rule.  Disagree. Reference to "front page" was deleted, as Form 1296.78 takes up just one side of one page.  Agree.
17.	Robert Krotzer Family Law Manager San Diego County Superior Court	A	a)	Agree.		
18.	Keri Griffith Court Program Manager Ventura County Superior Court	AM		<ol> <li>Rule 1280.10</li> <li>Page 4, subsection (f): Add at end of line 3, "shall proceed in the same court file."</li> <li>Form 1296.77–78 (Information Sheets)</li> <li>Pages 9 and 11: Delete "a" from instructions regarding signing under penalty of perjury</li> <li>Form 1296.79</li> <li>Page 12: The language in 7 requiring the petitioner to mail is in conflict with the attached rule 1280.10(e), which states that the clerk will mail.</li> <li>Bottom of page 12, stating, "Approved as conforming to court order, etc.," is unnecessary and should be removed.</li> </ol>	b) 1) c) 1)	Agree that (f) needs to be revised.  Agree.  Agree; language was changed to require the clerk to do the mailing.  Disagree.
19.	Tressa S. Kentner Court Executive Officer San Bernardino County Superior Court	A	a)	Agree.		
20.	Arnold H. Gold Rules Committee Chair Los Angeles County Superior	A	Y a)	Form 1296.79 1) In view of the fact that the contents of paragraphs 4 and 5 of proposed Form	a) 1)	Agree; see revised items 4 and 5.

21.	Merry Mayes Court Services Coordinator Stanislaus County Superior Court	AM	1296.79 apply only if the court sets aside the voluntary declaration of paternity, there should be a box between the number of the paragraph and the words that currently follow the paragraph numbers.  a) Needs a <i>Proof of Service</i> . If you want to keep this <i>Request for Hearing</i> in line with the RHH on wage assignment, it should have different instructions regarding service, and the clerk of the court would mail it after assigning a date. (Do you need or want to state on the instructions what county to file in, i.e. "the county you live in"?)	a) Disagree. Parties can use standard Proof of Service.
22.	Joe Fabrizio Los Angeles County Superior Court	AM	a) Rule 1280.10  1) Under section 7620 of the Family Code, in actions brought to establish parentage, the court records and hearings are generally confidential. Proceedings to set aside voluntary declarations under section 7575  Family Code do not appear to be covered by section 7620 or a similar provision. The Judicial Council may wish to consider the necessity for a confidentiality provision in rule 1280.10. This will be especially important should a paternity case be subsequently initiated in an existing case, which set aside the voluntary declaration of paternity, as appears to be allowed under paragraph (f) of the proposed rule.  2) The wording under paragraph (f) isn't all that clear as to whether using the existing file is required or optional.  b) Form 1296.79  1) Paragraph 7 of the <i>Order After Hearing</i> form requires the petitioner to mail a copy of a setaside to the CDSS Program Assistance	<ul> <li>a) <ol> <li>The statute does not require these filings to be confidential.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) Agree; see revised (f).</li> <li>b) <ol> <li>Order After Hearing to be sent by clerk only. See revised form 1296.79, item 7.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

				c)	Bureau. Paragraph (e) of the rule requires the clerk to mail a copy of the set-aside order to the Department of Social Services. Is this the same place? And if it is, do clerks need to duplicate the mailing?  Form 1296.77  1) Recommend that Judicial Council consider adding a certificate of mailing on the back side of the form which the clerk may utilize to complete the aforementioned mailing if required	c) 1)	Disagree. Parties can use standard <i>Proof of Service</i> .
23.	Margaret Little Los Angeles County Superior Court	AM		a)	Rule 1280.10 1) Page 4, lines 1–3: Something appears to have been omitted.	a) 1)	Agree. See revised subsection (f).
24.	Michael T. Sciorra Chairperson Family Support Council Forms Committee	AM	Y	a)	Form 1296.77 1) Item 4: "Grounds for this request are (check boxes that apply and explain in item 7 on the next page)."	a) 1)	Agree.
25.	Rita G. Mah Family Law Facilitator San Mateo County Superior Court	A		a) b)	Form 1296.65  1) Will the form be amended to include a box to request to set aside voluntary declaration of paternity as well?  Rule 1296.77	a) 1) b)	No, but could be considered in a future cycle.
					1) Suggest changing the information at the top of the caption to "your name and address or attorney's name and address" (as on the Financial Statement).	,	Disagree.
					2) Suggest deleting the word "state" before "child's" in line 2.		Agree.
					3) Suggest adding the phrase "state facts justifying any delay:" in 5c.		Agree; added to instructions.
					4) In page 4, can the details in the instructions be included on page one? It is easier to follow a complete form.	4)	Disagree. Forms need to be as concise as possible. The Information Sheet is for more detailed information.

26.	1 -		a) On the order form after item 3, suggest adding a	a)	Disagree. Setting aside judgment is
	Dir., Family Law Operations		box or a provision to say, "The judgment or order		appropriate only after results of blood
	Orange County Superior Court		for paternity is set aside" if the court should make		test.
			that order.		
27.	Cynthia Denenholz	AM	a) Form 1296.78	a)	
	Court Commissioner, Superior		1) Page 2, line 1 of paragraph 2: The responsive		1) Agree.
	Court of California, County of		declaration must be filed 10 calendar days		
	Sonoma		before the hearing per CCP 1005, as amended		
			1/2000.		
			b) Rule 1280.10	b)	
			1) Paragraph (b): Change to conform to form		1) Agree.
			title		
			2) Paragraph (d): Change to conform to form	4	2) Agree.
			title. The instructions state child support		
			agency should be served if it is providing		
			services. Should that requirement be added to		
			the rule?		
			3) Paragraph (e): Suggest changing the word	3	3) Agree.
			"made" to "written" and "Application" to		
			"Motion." Form may be titled incorrectly,		
			but change to conform to form title.		
			4) Paragraph (f) is not a sentence, as there is no	4	4) Agree that (f) needs to be revised.
			verb. Suggest rewording to "Any subsequent		
			proceedingsshall/shall not (or may/may		
			not) be filed in the court file initiated by the		
			filing of the Request for Hearing and		
			Application to Set Aside Voluntary		
			Declaration of Paternity." OR "Any		
			subsequent proceeding shall/shall not (or		
			may/may not) be filed in the voluntary		
			declaration of paternity court file."		
			c) Information Sheet for Form 1296.77	c)	
			1) In paragraph 5, are the county government		1) Statute does not designate venue.
			offices the proper venue if there is no court		County of residence of moving party
			order? The county in which the declaration		would be most convenient forum.

		was signed or the county of the other	r person's		
		residence may be the proper venue.			
28.	Robert Waring	a) Form 1296.77		a)	
	Legislative Counsel	1) Number 2: Concerns that applicants	will not	1)	Agree; see revised item 2.
	California Judges Association	possess a copy of the declaration an	d that		
		adding a check box stating that there	e is no		
		copy will discourage any efforts to o	obtain one.		
		2) Numbers 3 and 4: Suggest adding a	space to		
		allow a place to write in "Blood test	ing has	2)	Disagree; would not comply with
		already been done and I am not the	father,"		statute.
		along with "Please attach a copy of	the test		
		results."			
		3) Number 5: Suggest that the use of	he word		
		"entered" may confuse many applic	ants as to	3)	Disagree.
		what date to put. Suggest replacing	"entered"		-
		with "filed" or "file stamped by the	clerk" for		
		clarity.			
		4) Number 6: Suggest asking the appli	cant if a		
		DA has set child support for this ch	ild; if so,	4)	Disagree. Existence of child support
		the applicant must provide the coun	ty name		order is relevant only if declaration
		and case number. If a DA has set s	upport, a		of paternity is set aside.
		judgment that the applicant is the fa	ther		
		would be on record.			
		b) Instruction Form			
		1) Concerns with declarations signed l	ess than	b)	
		60 days ago, and suggest referring t	hose cases	1)	C
		to the facilitator.			information sheet with voluntary
					declaration of paternity, with
					instructions on how to rescind
		2) Last sentence in paragraph 1: Thou	-		declaration within 60 days.
		there was a 2-year statute to set asic		2)	Disagree.
		judgments of paternity UNLESS it v			
		following a voluntary declaration, a			
		the period extended to 3 years. App			
		should at least be told to contact the	facilitator		

	1	
to clarify this point.		
3) After the second paragraph, language should		
be included which tells applicants that this	3)	Agree regarding filing of <i>Proof of</i>
three copy process holds true for anything		Service.
they file with the court. In addition, the		
paragraph should include language instructing		
applicants to file their <i>Proof of Service</i> , or at		
least to bring it to court when they come.		
4) Instruction Form, page 4 of 5: Applicants		
should be told under number 1 to obtain a		
hearing date before they serve the papers.	4)	Agree.
5) Number 4 should also include language such	.,	1-8
as "You were told you were the father" and,		
"There has been paternity testing which	5)	Disagree. Moving party could be
shows you were not the father. If so, attach a		the mother.
copy of that testing."		the mother.
6) Number 6 should add, "or there is a district		
attorney that you pay child support based		
upon the other parent's request for support or	6)	Disagree.
welfare."		Disagree.
7) Number 7 should ask for all of the reasons		
numbers 4 AND/OR 5 were checked.		
c) Form 1296.78	7)	Disagree, but see revised item 7.
1) As to the response form, the instruction sheets	//	Disagree, but see revised item 7.
need to have the same changes made to	(2)	
paragraph 2.	c)	Agree as to revisions actually made.
d) Form 1296.79	1)	Agree as to revisions actually made.
1) Number 3b should provide a checklist of	-1\	
reasons set out in the application with	d)	D.
"Genetic testing shows not to be the	1)	Disagree.
father," added to the list.		
2) Number 4 should tell applicants where to go		
for testing or to arrange the testing and that		
they must comply with the arrangements	2)	, ,
made, or whom to contact to get the testing		the state.

			done.		
29.	Kristy Johnson	a)	Form 1296.77	a)	
29.	Child Support Statewide	a)	1) Item 4: Grounds for this request are (check	,	Agree.
	Sytems Bureau		one the boxes that apply and explain in item 7	1)	Agicc.
	Sytchis Bureau		on the next page):		
			2) Item 4b: Fraud or perjury, <del>duress, mental</del>	2)	Disagree. Duress, etc., already
			incapacity, mistake of fact or law, (Fam.	2)	deleted from form. "Inducing me to
			Code, section 2120 et seq.) inducing me to		sign" unnecessary, as terms are
			sign the voluntary acknowledgment of		clear enough and moving party has
			paternity (explain in item 7 on page 2)		to explain situation in item 7.
			3) Item 4c: Equitable grounds. Other (specify):	3)	-
			4) Item 5c: Delete.	4)	
			T) Telli sei Belete.	.,	item 4.
			5) Item 6: There is no judgment or order <u>issued</u>	5)	Agree.
			by a court or administrative agency for		
			paternity		
			6) Page 4, Instructions: Paragraph 4b (second	6)	Disagree. See response to a)4)
			bullet): You signed the voluntary declaration		above.
			because of someone's fraud or perjury. If you		
			check this box, explain in item 7 why you		
			believe there was fraud or perjury.		
			7) Paragraph 4c: Check this box if none neither	7)	Agree.
			of the circumstances but you believe #		
			would be reasonable and fair there are other		
			<u>reasons</u> to set aside the voluntary declaration		
			of paternity, and you are filing your request to		
			set aside as quickly as possible. Explain your		
			reasons.		
			8) Paragraph 5b (last line): voluntary	8)	Disagree. Term already explained
			declaration of paternity because of <u>fraud or</u>		on form.
			perjury.	2)	<b>D</b> : 0
			9) Paragraph 5c: Delete.	9)	
		1\	F 1006 70	1\	above.
		d)	Form 1296.79	d)	
			1) Item 1: Change "Judge" to "Judicial Officer"	1)	Agree.

and delete "Temporary Judge" and its check	
box.	
2) Item 6:paternity is set aside, the petitioner	2) Agree.
<u>clerk</u> shall send a copy	
3) Item 8: After "Other" add "(specify):"	3) "Specify" is already on the form.